

Fourteenth Loksabha

Session : 7

Date : 06-03-2006

Participants : Singh Dr. Manmohan

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Title : Discussion regarding India's vote on the issue of Iran's Nuclear Programme raised by Sh. C.K. Chandrappan on the 27th February, 2006.

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members have raised several points in the debate following my *suo motu* statement on our vote at the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iran's nuclear programme. Sir, I respect the views voiced by hon. Members on this very important issue and I thank all the Members for contributing to the debate in this august House.

Sir, several Members have made the point that our foreign policy should be guided by national interests, and that our positions on such issues should not be based on the position of other countries. My friends, Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Subrata Bose made those points, as did Shri Kharabela Swain. There can be no two opinions that Government should not take predetermined positions, or positions at the behest of other countries. No one can dispute that it is the Government's duty to take a position on such matters after a dispassionate examination of the facts, keeping in mind our national interests. I respectfully submit that in the present case, the Government has done precisely this. We have considered the facts and have exercised our independent judgment before taking a position. This is also the very essence of the policy of Non Alignment, which my friend Shri Rupchand Pal exhorted us to follow.

Sir, let me recapitulate the essential facts of the matter:

- Iran has the legal right to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but it also has certain obligations and responsibilities, based on the Safeguards Agreement which it voluntarily undertook with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

- It was in recognition of the existence of several unanswered questions that Iran agreed to start the process of assisting International Atomic Energy Agency with investigations into several past activities.
- An important part of this process was the voluntary suspension by Iran of all enrichment and reprocessing activity in November 2004.
- However, since last August, Iran has renewed production of Uranium Hexafluoride, and since then, of Uranium enrichment.
- Unresolved questions regarding centrifuge imports and designs to make Uranium metallic hemispheres remain. The origin of such procurement is an issue of direct concern for us.

Under these circumstances, our position was based on these facts, which emerged from an objective investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency , and through information disclosed by Iran itself.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is also the question that several hon. Members raised regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors' meeting today. Shri Chandrappan and Shri Owaisi spoke of this. I should inform Members that it is as yet not clear in what manner this issue will be taken up by the Board of Governors today. The Resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors last month mentions certain steps that Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency will be taking. Discussions are taking place in Vienna on this matter. The Government's approach will be based on our consistent policy of promoting efforts for a resolution of issues through dialogue and discussions. I would like to assure hon. Members that our Government will take into account the sentiments expressed in this House in this context.

Some points were also made regarding options that could have been explored by the international community. There have also been discussions between Iran and Russia in this regard. We remain hopeful that solutions acceptable to all sides will be found. We do not favour confrontation, rhetoric or coercive measures as these only exacerbate tensions in the region and beyond. India has consistently stated that all sides

must work to find mutually acceptable compromise solutions, and that confrontation should be avoided at all costs. For this to be possible, time must be given for diplomacy to work. Sir, I think there is consensus in Parliament and in our country that confrontation is not in the interests of India or of our region. Whenever this matter is taken up, we will work with all like-minded countries, including those from the Non-Aligned Movement, for a mutually acceptable resolution of the issue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, several hon. Members, including Maj. Gen. Khanduri expressed concerns regarding our relations with Iran, and the effect of these developments on this important relationship. As I said in my *suo motu* statement, our Government is committed to widening, deepening and expanding our diverse and mutually beneficial ties with Iran. Only recently, my colleague the Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E. Ahamed, visited Tehran. He had meetings with the President of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Ahmadinejad, as well as several Ministers of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Shri Ahamed emphasized our desire to remain engaged with Iran on all issues of mutual interest. Sir, our desire to further deepen the friendly and productive ties between our two countries was fully reciprocated.

Government will continue to monitor the situation closely, and will deal with the Iran issue with the seriousness that it merits.

In dealing with this issue, we will pay due attention to our relationship with Iran, the need to maintain peace and stability in the Gulf region and safeguarding our own security.

Sir, I reiterate that this House can rest assured that we will also take into account the sentiments expressed in this august House.

MR. SPEAKER: Now we will take up the next item, Calling Attention. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

... (Interruptions)

श्री रामदास आठवले (पंढरपुर) : गोधरा इश्यु बहुत सीरियस इश्यु है, बनर्जी समिति की रिपोर्ट को टेबल किया जाए।... (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: I have said that I will allow you.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions) ...*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप सभी अपनी-अपनी सीट्स पर जाएं। मैं सब सदस्यों को कहना चाहता हूँ कि थोड़ा शांत हो जाएं, क्योंकि अशांत होने से समस्या का कोई हल नहीं होगा। आप सब जानते हैं कि हमारी रूल बुक है, उसके मुताबिक मैं चलने की कोशिश कर रहा हूँ। हम लोगों ने तय किया था कि प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहब का जवाब हो जाए, According to rule, now it is Calling Attention. I have not said that I shall not allow. Only some procedure has to be followed. Now, hon. Members, do you think anything is being recorded? Except we are showing that we are not disciplined, nothing else is going to the people of this country.

My appeal to you is to raise this important issue, I am not stopping anyone. If you want it to be recorded, if you want the country to know of it, this is not the manner. Therefore, let it be soon over and I shall allow all these things, but one by one so that things can be recorded. But please take your seats first. At least have this much of courtesy shown to the Chair. मैं आपको कह रहा हूँ कि मैं मौका दूंगा। लेकिन ले करने का भी एक नियम है। एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट के साथ वह देनी होगी। I have to get a notice for that. There is no question of allowing or disallowing at this stage. Therefore, by shouting it cannot do. I will not submit so easily. You can go on shouting rest of the day, I will not adjourn so that you get exhausted by shouting.

... (Interruptions)

* Not Recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I call Shri Vijay Kumar Malhotra to raise the Calling Attention.